

R 030859Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5865
INFO NSC WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS KIGALI 000075

DEPT FOR PA/PRS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: KPAO PREL
SUBJECT: RWANDA REACTION: PRESIDENT'S INTERVIEW WITH
AL-ARABIYA

REF: STATE 7500

¶1. (U) Poloff delivered reftel talking points and interview transcript to Rwandan Mufti Sheikh Saleh Habimana on February 12. Habimana said he hopes the United States will fully utilize the "opportunity" presented by President Obama's election to engage with the Muslim world, and make the strong distinction between Muslims as a whole and "the very small minority" of extreme terrorist elements. Habimana expressed his personal admiration for President Obama, and produced a copy of the President's inaugural address, saying he has referred to it regularly. In conclusion, Habimana reiterated the high regard in which Rwandan Muslims and Rwandans generally hold the United States.

¶2. (U) Comment. Rwanda's Muslim community is relatively small (approximately five percent of the population), but it has been generally well-disposed toward the United States. Outreach, such as the President's interviews and increased dialogue with the Muslim world by the administration, particularly in Africa, will be well received locally. End comment.

SYMINGTON